

# Inspection of Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited

Inspection dates:

26 to 29 July 2022

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

**Information about this provider**

Training Plus (Merseyside) Limited (TPM) is an independent learning provider that is based in Liverpool city centre on Merseyside. At the time of the inspection, there were 140 apprentices studying apprenticeship standards at level 2 to level 5. Of these, 78 were aged 16 to 18 and 62 were aged 19 and over. Sixty-three apprentices were on the level 2 early years practitioner apprenticeship, 39 were on the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship and three were on the level 5 early years lead practitioner apprenticeship. Twenty-six apprentices were on the level 2 customer service practitioner apprenticeship, seven were on the level 3 business administrator apprenticeship, one was on the team leader/supervisor apprenticeship and one was on the operations or departmental manager apprenticeship. The provider also offers traineeships, which were not in scope for inspection as there were too few trainees.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices are highly conscientious. They consistently demonstrate exceptional workplace behaviours. Apprentices are highly motivated and want to succeed. They enjoy their courses and display excellent attitudes to learning. Apprentices swiftly develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to become successful at work.

Apprentices thrive in an inclusive culture at TPM. Apprentices with additional learning and/or support needs receive highly effective and skilful support from their teachers, trainers and additional support tutors. Apprentices told inspectors that they felt that they had 'amazing' support. Teachers and trainers provide extensive support that makes apprentices feel cared for. Teachers and trainers have an unwavering desire to empower apprentices to improve their confidence and self-belief, which helps apprentices at work and in their lives.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours because of their training. Level 3 business administrator apprentices manage petty cash, reconcile bank accounts and pay invoices efficiently. Level 2 early years practitioner apprentices confidently help children to learn how to tell the time. Level 2 and level 3 early years apprentices benefit from additional courses in sign language to help them communicate with children who are deaf or are hearing impaired.

Apprentices have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They know how to report any concerns they may have. For example, level 2 and level 3 early years apprentices know how to protect the children in their care by reporting instances of bruising in unusual places on children. They know the importance of reporting and recording accidents or injuries to children in their care.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have a clear and highly effective rationale to provide apprenticeships that prepare apprentices for the next steps in their careers. They have developed strong and effective partnerships with external organisations and employers to ensure an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of apprentices, employers and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority priorities. For example, TPM provides level 2 early years practitioner, level 3 early years educator and level 5 early years lead practitioner apprenticeships to provide a career pathway in early years and to reduce the skills gaps and vacancies in early years locally, regionally and nationally.

Leaders collect detailed information about what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their training. Teachers and trainers use this information skilfully to plan an individualised and ambitious curriculum for each apprentice, based on their starting points. This ensures that apprentices are challenged to reach their full potential. As a result, apprentices achieve their apprenticeship, with almost half achieving distinction grades in their final assessments.

Apprentices' training is ordered in a way that enables them to build their knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally. For example, level 2 early years practitioner apprentices learn about safeguarding before moving on to child development topics. They then learn about partnership working and working with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They apply these skills in the workplace when selecting accurately the appropriate sensory toys for children. As a result, apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful at work.

Teachers and trainers use a variety of effective strategies to teach apprentices. They use assessment activities such as discussions, mock tests and written assignments skilfully to identify gaps in knowledge and to inform further teaching. Apprentices readily recall previous learning. Level 3 business administrator apprentices recall information about data analysis and financial monitoring. Level 2 early years practitioner apprentices explain about cognition, bereavement and sickle cell anaemia. Level 3 early years educator apprentices describe how they support children with SEND such as autism spectrum disorder. Apprentices retain information in their long-term memory and apply these skills in different situations at work adeptly.

Trainers meticulously plan and coordinate the on- and off-the-job training with apprentices and their employers. Most employers routinely participate in apprentices' reviews of progress and identify accurately what apprentices do well and the skills they need to develop. Trainers, employers and apprentices plan collaboratively a range of activities for apprentices to practise and hone their skills at work. As a result, apprentices swiftly develop their knowledge and skills.

Apprentices' attendance and punctuality at off-the-job training and in the workplace are excellent. Teachers and trainers have extremely high expectations for behaviour. Apprentices are calm and respectful. They participate enthusiastically in their off-the-job training. They work collaboratively and listen carefully to each other's opinions and ideas, for example when identifying the transitions that children go through when starting school.

Teachers and trainers provide effective feedback to level 3 business administrator apprentices that tells them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. They are often challenged to provide greater evaluation and justification in their work to achieve higher grades, for example to include further analysis or add workplace examples. Apprentices act on this feedback, and as a result their work improves over time.

Teachers and trainers frequently provide oral feedback to level 2 and level 3 early years apprentices following assessment of their work. Although apprentices find this helpful, they do not always remember the details of the feedback and are unable to act on it to improve their work.

Leaders support apprentices exceptionally well to develop their wider skills and to help others in their community. For example, apprentices are highly involved in charity work and fundraising, including working with disadvantaged children and young people through community sports programmes and music events.

Teachers and trainers prepare level 3 business administrator apprentices for their final assessments effectively. Apprentices practise using examination papers and mock assessments and become confident with examination techniques. As a result, most apprentices are suitably prepared for their final assessments.

Apprentices on level 2 and level 3 early years apprenticeships are not suitably prepared for their final assessments because they do not know the requirements of their final assessments early enough in their programme or what they need to do to achieve distinction grades.

Leaders and managers help apprentices to overcome significant barriers to their education and in their lives. For example, leaders and managers arrange transport to ensure apprentices can attend examinations. Apprentices arriving at the centre who have not eaten are provided with breakfast and lunch. Managers encourage and support apprentices to develop their resilience through the mental health champions programme and the TPM 'making a splash' course to build apprentices' confidence and self-esteem.

Teachers and trainers routinely provide apprentices with information about apprenticeship progression routes in the early years and business sectors. However, they do not provide apprentices with effective careers and progression guidance so that apprentices understand the possible career options available to them.

Teachers and trainers have the appropriate experience and qualifications to teach their subjects. They benefit from a wide range of relevant and effective training to develop their teaching skills and occupational knowledge. This includes training on county lines and gang crime, sexual exploitation, understanding childhood trauma, conflict management, and developing apprentices' independent learning skills. This helps teachers and trainers to improve their subject knowledge and teaching skills.

Governors are highly experienced and well qualified in the further education sector, such as in mental health, SEND, safeguarding, and the teaching of English, mathematics and digital skills. They use their specialist skills for the benefit of the provider's staff. For example, they provide training on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and mental health awareness.

Governors have an accurate and thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Alongside leaders and managers, they have a shared passion and commitment to continually improve the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Governors receive clear and thorough reports from leaders, which enable them to hold leaders and managers to account for their actions. For example, they recognised that the quality and performance of the hairdressing apprenticeship was weaker than early years and business apprenticeships. Governors worked with leaders to withdraw the hairdressing apprenticeship as a result.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have recruited suitably qualified and experienced staff to support the safeguarding of apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding officer (SO) have a strong relationship with the local children's safeguarding board. The team works closely with the North West 'Prevent' duty coordinator to identify threats and risks of radicalisation and extremism in the locations that apprentices live and work.

Staff benefit from training on national and local safeguarding issues. The TPM online learning platform and face-to-face training include county lines, involuntary celibacy (Incels) and the manosphere, and the Ofsted sexual abuse review.

Leaders ensure that they comply with their safer recruitment policy. They carry out relevant checks such as disclosure and barring service, references, right to work and overseas work checks for all staff.

The DSL and SO ensure that records of safeguarding incidents are recorded effectively and closed appropriately. Close relationships with external agencies such as housing associations and mental health support ensure that apprentice's needs are met rapidly.

## What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Teachers and trainers should ensure that the feedback that level 2 and level 3 early years apprentices receive helps them to remember what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that level 2 and level 3 early years apprentices are prepared for and have a thorough understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades available early in the apprenticeship, so that apprentices are prepared well and feel confident when taking their assessments.
- Teachers and trainers should make sure that apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance that helps them to consider the wider opportunities available to them.

## **Provider details**

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Brian Quinn
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 December 2011

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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